



BONHOMME RICHARD'S ALMANAC

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"I have not yet begun to fight!"



THE NAVY LIFE FINE FOR HER, FOR WOMEN

By JO1 (SW) Robert W. Garnand

When asked if she believes women should be in the Navy, Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Second Class Melanie Marie Braam said, "Definitely yes!"

Since March is Women's History month, Braam took the time to talk about her thoughts on women in the Navy.

"Women make many contributions. Not only at shore commands, but onboard ships too," said the native of Mankato, Minnesota. "The increased influx of women on ships has caused many changes throughout the fleet," Braam said. "That has been one of the biggest changes in creating what many call the 'new Navy'. There are

those who think that is a negative thing, but people need to realize that we are still in the growing process, where rules and policies are being tested and defined."

Braam went on to say, "During this adjustment people need to be patient and people from the 'old Navy' need to keep an open mind and give these changes a chance. With the changes in our society and the new definition of the American family as we know it, it is often required to have a double income household."

"I feel that if females work in the civilian sector, they should be

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PENTAGON MIGHT CUT MARINES AT 'GITMO'

By Rowan Scarborough, *The Washington Times*

The Pentagon is considering reducing the number of Marines at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba after an intelligence assessment downplayed the threat of a quick invasion by Fidel Castro's forces, military sources said. The Navy's Atlantic Fleet headquarters in Norfolk, which oversees the sprawling U.S. base on Cuba's southeastern tip, confirmed a new security review with several options under study.

The military sources, who asked not to be identified, said one option is to reduce the contingent of

about 342 Marines, or two companies, that guard the base's 17-mile barbed-wire perimeter.

The sources said the time it would take Cuban forces to mobilize for an attack has increased from a matter of hours to days. Cuba maintains 65,000 troops in its armed forces and has mechanized army units stationed on the base's outskirts.

Dubbed "Gitmo," the station long has been an irritant to the Cuban leader's iron-fisted rule over the Caribbean island. The station stands

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STOCK MARKET

LEADING INDEXES SURGE AGAIN

By Kenneth N. Gilpin

Stock prices staged a broad, strong rally Tuesday even though the Federal Reserve Board raised short-term interest rates and gave every indication it was prepared to do so again in about two months. Both the old and new economy companies posted strong gains, and the leading market indexes all registered gains of 2 percent or more. The Dow Jones industrial average closed at 10,907.34, up 227.10, or 2.13 percent. Since March 14, the blue chip index has gained more than 1,000 points. Still, so far this year the Dow is down a bit more than 5 percent. The Standard & Poor's 500-stock index rose 37.24, or 2.6 percent, to 1,493.87, its first record of the year. The Nasdaq composite index, which was down by more than 100 points early in the session, staged a turnaround and gained 101.68, or 2.2 percent, to 4,711.68. And the Wilshire 5000 index rose 292.98, or 2.1 percent, to 14,346.22.

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as a symbol of American resolve to oppose Mr. Castro's communist government, which has persisted despite the wave of democracy and free-market thinking sweeping the hemisphere in the past 20 years.

Roger Charles, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel and member of Soldiers for the Truth, a military reform group, said intelligence estimates are often wrong. He questioned the need to remove any Marines.

"What the administration is now claiming is there will be sufficient warning time to send reinforcements to Gitmo before the Castro regime could take any action," he said. "But if Castro was determined to do something, Castro would be occupying the officer's club at Gitmo before we could get Marines from Camp Lejeune to Cherry Point [N.C.] to board the airplanes to fly to Gitmo."

FRIDAY'S SITE TV SCHEDULE

CHANNEL 2

1030 THAT 70'S SHOW
1100 POLICE ACADEMY
1600 REPLACEMENT KILLERS
1730 JEOPARDY
1800 STAR TREK: GENERATIONS
2000 DOC HOLLYWOOD
2200 BODY LANGUAGE

CHANNEL 6

1030 SABRINA
1100 LITTLE MERMAID
1630 WATERBOY
1800 THE CONFESSION
2000 THE MATRIX
2200 PAYBACK

TV SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
DUE TO OPERATIONAL COMMITMENTS

BONHOMME RICHARD'S ALMANAC

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N A T I O N A L / I N T E R N A T I O N A L N E W S

COURT RULES FDA CAN'T REGULATE

By Linda Greenhouse

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dealt a sharp blow to the Clinton administration's efforts to curb smoking, ruling 5-4 that the Food and Drug Administration had never received authority from Congress to regulate tobacco products.

The decision, rejecting rules that the FDA proposed in 1995 to restrict the marketing of cigarettes to minors, hands the question of tobacco regulation back to Congress. An effort to confer jurisdiction on the FDA won some bipartisan support in Congress in 1998 but became mired in a broader debate over whether to give the cigarette industry immunity from damage suits.

Tuesday's ruling was notable for the strong language that both the majority and the dissenting opinions used in describing the dangers of smoking, which causes some 400,000 deaths a year in the United States. Although essentially a ruling on administrative law, the decision paid more than usual attention to the underlying policy issues, as if in recognition that the debate will continue elsewhere.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who said in her majority opinion that the FDA had amply demonstrated that tobacco use was perhaps the "single most significant threat to public health", sounded at times almost apologetic for her conclusion that the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act could not be stretched far enough to accommodate the regulations.

FIRST SHIP TO GULF WITH FEMALE CO

By Mark Thompson, U.S.S. Jarrett

When the hull of the USS JARRETT gently taps the large rubber pier bumpers, Sailors and Officers gather in a moment of triumph. The docking concludes more than a year's training in preparation for their looming six-month mission. "Today we had to stress all areas, navigation, communication and ship handling, and you did it well," the Captain tells the crew. As the huddle breaks, two small children excitedly run up the gangplank. They hug the Captain, who asks, "Did you see Mommy's ship come in?"

"Mommy" is Commander Kathleen McGrath, who next week is expected to mark a historic first. She will be the first American woman ever to take a warship to sea. Only 12 of the Navy's 220 admirals are women.

McGrath will lead the Jarrett and its crew of 262 to the Middle East, where they will prowl the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf. Their mission is to hunt down ships smuggling Iraqi oil in violation of United Nations sanctions. During its two months on the gulf assignment, the Jarrett's crew expects to board at least 30 vessels and order violators to friendly ports, where their ships and cargo will be auctioned off.

A ship's commander is like the mayor of a small town. McGrath's eight-level domain ranges from the officers' staterooms above to the Sailors' berthing areas to the laundry down below. She barks orders on the bridge, offers praise to Sailors in the lower decks and sometimes snatches a few minutes alone in her

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able work in the military as well," she said. "In saying this, I think that it is essential for the equal treatment of both genders that women be a part of sea duty. For me personally, I enjoy the opportunity to see foreign places along with the challenges sea duty offers."

"I came in the Navy for the College fund," said Braam, who works in the USS BONHOMME RICHARD's Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department office. "I went to college full time my senior year of high school and realized that I needed a break from school and needed to do something new in my life. I was thinking about the military a little and by chance a Navy recruiter called me," she said. "I knew then that was what I needed to do. Go into the Navy, get my college fund, meet different people and see some cool places."

"The Navy does its best to ensure that all people, regardless of gender, race, or religion are treated equal. To a certain extent, they cannot control the personal behaviors or attitudes of Sailors. That is to say that a few might show favoritism to a certain gender or race," she said. "As a whole, though, the Navy is pretty good about ensuring that all Sailors are provided the same opportunities."

As far as promotions go, Braam said, "Advancement in the Navy today seems to have nothing to do at all with gender bias. I made Petty Officer Second Class in less than 2 years in the Navy," she added, "as well as my shipmate, a male, who graduated from 'A' school with me."

"I think that advancement depends mostly on the dedication of the Sailor and whether they want it bad enough."

As a dedicated Sailor herself, Braam has definitely taken advantage of the opportunities the Navy has offered her.



AZ2 Melanie Braam works in the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department Office. (Photo by J01(SW) Robert W. Garnand.)

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stateroom to practice Haydn's Military Symphony on the violin. McGrath's job requires her to discipline a handful of Sailors every month for infractions. She resists the temptation to prove that she can be just as tough as a male commander. "I don't try to emulate a man, nor do I try to do what a guy would do," she says. "I have to be myself."

McGrath has been fortunate to have a husband who put her career first. She met Brandon at a Navy school more than a decade ago. Brandon is proud of what his wife has accomplished. "It couldn't have happened five years ago, but it's the right time to have a woman commanding a man-of-war," he says. Brandon, who retired in 1996 after 17 years as an officer, is now the children's primary caregiver.

SPORTS



Staff Sgt. Gregory Mulholland, platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, C. Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/4, inspects the gear of Cpl. Roudy Easterday, 2nd Squad leader, during the platoon's field gear inspection. The platoon was inspected in the new uniform of the day, desert camouflaged utilities, after the 15th MEU(SOC) entered the United States Navy Central Command Area of Operations. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Glenn Holloway.)

CONGRATULATIONS!

ENLISTED AVIATION WARFARE SPECIALIST

DC1 (SW) Stephen J. Huitrado

WOMEN'S NCAA SCORES

Oklahoma 76	Purdue 74
Duke 90	W. Kentucky 70
Tennessee 75	Arizona 60
Texas Tech 76	Tulane 59
Old Dominion 96	SMU 76
Ga.Tech 66	Vanderb 1t 65
Georgia 83	Stanford 64
North Carolina 83	Rice 50

MEN'S NCAA

Duke 88	Florida 84
Oklahoma St. 77	Seton Hall 71
North Carolina 70	Tenn. 67
Tulsa 81	Miami 68
Michigan State 76	Syracuse 75
UCLA 70	Iowa State 65
LSU 66	Wisconsin 59
Gonzaga 78	Purdue 74

NHL SCORES:

Boston 4	Tampa Bay 0
Ottawa 7	Atlanta 1
Carolina 5	New Jersey 0
Pittsburgh 8	N.Y. Islanders 2
Florida 4	N.Y. Rangers 3

NBA SCORES:

New Jersey 100	Toronto 93
Atlanta 82	Miami 77
Indiana 95	New York 91



Wednesday, flight operations were ongoing on the flight deck and meals are being made and served up on the main deck and 02 level. Living and work spaces are being cooled, but down on the 5th deck, in the hot bowls of the Bonhomme Richard, Machinest Mates First Class (Surface Warfare) Jamie Manalili (right) and Victor Servian conduct a passdown on receiving and confirming gauge readings on the automatic boiler control (ABC) console with on-site equipment gauge readings called in from the Forward Main Machinery Room. The readings are essential to assure that boiler and auxiliary equipment operation and performance is maintained at the proper levels. Failure to maintain proper equipment operation could result in a delay for the 'Revolutionary Gator' on its maiden deployment. (Photo by JOC(SW/AW) Stephen K. Robinson)

MESSAGE FROM SHIP'S CHAPLAIN:

The Bonhomme Richard has now completed several projects which shows America at its best. From Dili, East Timor, to Singapore, to Phuket, Thailand, Sailors and Marines have extended their hands and hearts to help others. Whether using Project Handclasp PH materials at the ready, or taking the time to organize, paint or clean youth facilities we've done a great job in helping to sustain individuals and rebuild hope. Thai children received our gifts and hard work. A youth facility in Singapore was upgraded when we turned to at Boys Town Home and organized their thrift shop and put muscle into organizing the entire home.

We are now several weeks past East Timor but perhaps the greatest thanks for the entire crew of Sailors and Marines needs to be given to those who participated while not being given the opportunity to go ashore due to the sensitive situation. These people suffered the greatest deprivation and hardship because of violence. Project Handclasp provided toys for children, some of whose brothers and sisters or parents were now missing, and books and hygienic materials for the school they attended. Sailors were able to offload and distribute these items. A very special kind of gift not often donated were the bikes. Having been briefed by another ARG about the special loss of cycle transportation for work, our bicycles, given by generous donors in San Diego were a special effort to begin rebuilding the infrastructure. Dad's and Mom's can now go to work saving time and energy for more important tasks.



BHR Sailors enjoy songs of gratitude from the children of St. Peters Catholic School in East Timor. (Photo by PH3 Scott Adam Webb.)

The PH materials were a great way to attach our compassion whether most of us on the ship knew it or not. Others back in America have helped us by being generous. Onboard we had Mr. Robert Rask , IT3 Chris Davis and Seaman Luke Woodin who fasted and gave up three meals to ask you to give to a relief effort for the Island people. BHR folks contributed nearly two thousand dollars in money. It may be 'back there', but that money is helping. I have just received confirmation that the money reached Bishop Belo. He is the Bishop who boated out to us and provided religious sacraments for some of the crew. When I asked him how this money could help, he said: "I will use it first for the hospital...to repair equipment, then for the children in the school...to give them hope." Let me express my sincere gratitude, and that of Mr. Rask, for making not only Project Handclasp such a success wherever we've gone, but especially our efforts and your special gifts in East Timor. They definitely made a difference!

Father Boucher

SPECIAL PAYS AND TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR GULF TOUR

By JOC Stephen K. Robinson

The brief stop-over in Bahrain March 27-29 of all embarked military members on USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6), USS DENVER (LPD 9) and USS PEARL HARBOR (LSD 52) will mean one thing is for certain; the initiation of Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger pay and federal tax-exemption on pays received while in the area of operation of the Arabian Gulf.

According to Disbursing Clerk Chief Petty Officer Alan Iott, Deputy Disbursing Officer onboard Bonhomme Richard, "Effective the day we transit the Strait of Hormuz, all attached Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) military personnel will start receiving Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger pay, which is \$150 per month, or for any fraction of a month, and federal-tax exemption on all pays up to a set figure."

For pay purposes, the Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation, Volume 7A, Chapter 44, page 44-2, paragraph 2 states, "Effective 17 January 1991, Executive Order 12744 designates the land, air space and adjacent waters in the areas of the Persian Gulf; Red Sea; Gulf of Oman; Gulf of Aden; that portion of the Arabian Sea that lies north of 10 degrees N. latitude and west of 68 degrees E. longitude; and the total land areas of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates as "combat zones."

Quoting from vol. 7A of the Regs., Iott continued, "A service member, assigned to duty in the combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area on or after 21 November 1995, who is directed to perform duty, granted official leave, or is authorized to depart the zone or area for

other lawful cause, and whose departure or return is on any day of the month may receive the combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area exclusion for that month.

"What this is saying is that as long as one is in the applicable areas one day, or portion of a day during a month, he or she shall receive Hostile Fire/Immanent Danger Pay. We are scheduled to be in that applicable area commencing before the end of the month," Iott added.

He further elaborated, "According to the same reference, same such members will additionally qualify for federal income tax exemption under the 'Combat Zone Income Tax Exclusion for Active Service in a Combat Zone or Hazardous Duty Area.'

"The same stands true for tax exclusion as it does for extra pay," Iott said.

Iott smirkishly added, "For those who are afraid of being excluded for any reason it would take an extraordinary feat. The regulation states that periods in the zone or area during which a service member is absent from their duty assignment in the zone or area on account of sickness, wounds, internment by the enemy, or other lawful cause are periods of active service and such member would still receive both benefits as long as their unit is in 'the area.'"

There are some precautions to be taken by O-1 and above personnel of all services to ensure their proper participation in the scheme of things. All O-1 and above personnel must file a 'Certification Statement Withholding Election for Of-

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ficers Entitled to Combat Zone/Tax Exclusion (CZTE)' benefits form. This form can be acquired from their respective disbursing office. Failure to complete and file this form will result in the decision being made for them, and it may not be their desire.

"The form is for tax year 2000, and in essence it requires the O-1 and above commissioned service member provide name, pay grade, social security number, and branch of service. That's the easy part. After that there is a decision to be made," said Gunnery Sgt. Joe Chaparro, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) administrative chief.

Chaparro continued, "The form reads 'Pursuant to the provision of Treasury Reg. 31.3402(p)-1, I request that income taxes be withheld from my pay for any period that I am serving in a combat zone. The following options are available for computing the amount of federal income tax withheld: Option 1 - Based on my total taxable wages, less the maximum monthly wage exclusion, and using the withholding status I claim on my Treasury Department (TD) Form W-4. Option 2 reads - Based on my total taxable wages without regard to the maximum monthly wage exclusion, and using the monthly withholding status I claim on my TD Form W-4.'"

"The big difference between the two is that Option 1 allows the officer to receive their tax exempt monies now, while Option 2 provides for the officer to file for the taxes in their return at the end of the year. So, in essence, Option 1 gives them the money now. Option 2 gives them the money in their 2000

Federal Tax Return. If a CZTE is not completed and returned to the respective disbursing officer Option 1 will be automatically initiated," Chaparro said.

"By the way, lest anyone wonder what the maximum monthly wage exclusion is, it's \$4,719.00; the maximum amount of base pay allowed to be received by each of the senior enlisted advisors of each service," Iott added. "Officers receiving more than that in all their 'pays' added together will be taxed for that difference between the \$4,719.00 figure and those pays they receive."

"To lay to rest any anxiety about what annual income figure will appear on the 2000 W-2 form is simply answered. All enlisted and Warrant officer's W-2's will automatically reflect an eight-month income figure so as not to pay tax on the income that is tax-exempt. The same will happen with officers who select Option 1 on their CZTE forms," Sanchez continued to elaborate. "However, for officers selecting Option 2, it's a little different. Their W-2's will reflect the amount of all pays minus the months they were eligible for tax-exempt status. They will continue to pay tax as though they were receiving all pays and being taxed for them on a monthly basis. Their W-2's will also reflect the total income they received without reflecting the tax-exempt monies received. The tax they paid throughout the tax-exempt period will be returned to them in their 2000 tax refund."

According to Iott, Bonhomme Richard personnel should expect to start receiving the extra monies April 15 which will be reflected on April's Leave and Earning Statement.